

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, to explain to the colleagues what is going to happen next, we are going to conclude debate this evening on the Chemical Weapons Convention and then reinstate it tomorrow.

We will begin tomorrow with the closed session which will be a 2-hour closed session in the Old Senate Chamber, and thereafter resume debate, including the motions to strike.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I have a unanimous-consent request that has been cleared on both sides. I ask unanimous consent that 1 hour of the 2 hours devoted to the closed session not be counted against the 10-hour debate time as provided in the consent agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PUTTING FAMILIES FIRST: 100 DAYS PAST DUE AND COUNTING

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, over the past months South Dakota has suffered some of the worst disasters in recent memory. The drifts of snow that have paralyzed our State and killed over 100,000 cattle are at last melting, but their runoff has swelled our lakes and rivers to overflowing and forced thousands to evacuate in the face of devastating floodwaters. Only the hard work of South Dakotans, building dikes and filling sandbags to save the homes of their friends and neighbors, has prevented the serious disaster we are facing from having more catastrophic consequences.

I am also proud to say that during these disasters, our bipartisan elected leadership has set politics aside and worked together for the good of our State. Our Democratic President, our Republican Governor, our entire congressional delegation, and every local leader have made overcoming the disaster our first priority. As Governor Bill Janklow of South Dakota stated, "There is no way that Republican or Democrat politics should come into play when we are dealing with the things that are vital to all the people of this State." Together, we believe that meeting the needs of our families and our communities should always come first.

This philosophy has served South Dakota well during its time of need, and I am convinced that what has worked in South Dakota can work here in Washington. Recently, we passed the

100th day of this Congress. Since we began this session, 14 million children attended classes in schools that are falling apart, 180,000 babies were born without health care coverage and 51 million workers labored without a pension plan. Unfortunately, this Congress has accomplished nothing to meet these dire needs. It is now time to make good on our pledges of cooperation. Just as South Dakotans have joined together for the good of our State, we in Congress must join together for the good of our country and deliver much-needed relief to America's working families.

On the first day of the 105th Congress, I introduced bills to enact the Families First Agenda to raise the incomes of working families, extend affordable health coverage to children, expand the retirement benefits of workers, and make it easier for students of all ages to receive a quality education. Now it is time to roll up our sleeves and get to work. I urge my colleagues to join with me to support America's families. Every day we wait is another day they struggle to make ends meet.

Mr. President, I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues a very important letter I received from Kym Pacheco, a resident of Sioux Falls, SD. It is a heartbreaking letter, and it tells the story of working families better than any words of mine. Despite a 105-hour work week as a truck driver, Kym's husband earns just enough for the family to get by. Each month they struggle to pay their rent and the grocery, gas, and phone bills. "Mind you," she writes, "none of this includes car repairs, school supplies, clothes, medications, or car insurance. There are no luxuries—week-end vacations, a nice car, trips to McDonald's. What we wouldn't do to be able to take our son to the Black Hills for a week! . . . But we cannot put any money into the savings. We literally live paycheck to paycheck!"

Mr. President, no one in our Nation who works 105 hours a week should live one paycheck away from an empty stomach or a missed rent payment. Families like Kym's work hard but cannot get ahead, and they fear for the future of their children. They have faith that life can be better, but they are depending upon us to give them the help they need. We cannot let them down. As Kym continues, "There are so many problems in the U.S., but I honestly believe that when our government starts passing laws that actually give families affordable, decent coverage health insurance, decent wages, tax breaks for poor and middle class working families, our country will become better. It would be a start! Our children deserve an opportunity to live better than we did!"

Mr. President, her children do deserve that opportunity, and we can give it to them. Let us accept Kym's challenge. If we put the interests of working families before party politics,

we can provide working families with tax breaks for education and ensure that parents can afford to take their children to the doctor. We can ensure that in future years when Kym's children retire they will have financial security. All of this is in our power, but to meet our goal we must work together. I hope my colleagues will join me in this task.

COMMENDING VOLUNTEERS ON THE FLOOD RELIEF EFFORT

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I want to highlight the commendable effort displayed by the legion of West Virginia volunteers who have done so much to help their neighbors and communities affected by last month's flooding in sixteen West Virginia counties. Their selfless dedication to neighbors in need is in the finest West Virginia tradition of community spirit and support.

The efforts of volunteers from the Fire and Rescue Departments throughout the affected area are especially noteworthy. These heroic workers rescued numerous families and individuals trapped by the raging flood waters that swept through my beloved state. You may recall some of the harrowing events displayed on television news, particularly from those hardest hit counties of Kanawha, Cabell, and Wirt. Also working during the storms and in their destructive aftermath, utility employees labored long hours in driving rain and deep mud to restore electricity, gas, water, and sewer service to the affected communities.

Mr. President, churches have always sustained the people of West Virginia, and never more so than when disaster strikes. Aside from providing physical sustenance to the affected residents, the community churches that dot our hills and hollows have also provided flood victims with moral and spiritual comfort to ease the pain of all that has been lost. Particularly hard hit in this flood, the people of Clendenin have received extensive and much-needed support from churches, neighbors, and other charitable organizations. After all of the floods of last year, it is uplifting to see that such strong community spirit yet endures among the Mountaineers of West Virginia. This year, as in previous years, volunteers, churches, and organizations like the Red Cross have risen above the flood waters of disaster to provide comfort and hope to their neighbors. I am reminded of the words of poet, essayist, and critic Matthew Arnold:

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels, appear,
Radiant with ardour divine!
Beacons of hope, ye appear!
Langour is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.

Surely, the concerned faces and helping hands of volunteers and church workers seemed divinely inspired to the flood victims who benefited from